(d) if answer to part (b) above be in the negative the reasons therefor; and

(e) what steps are proposed to be taken to boost up the sagging exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEAGDE): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) to (d) As per the available provisional data received from the Directorate General of Commercal Intelligence & Statistics (DGGI&S), during April—December, 1998-99 exports registered a growth of 11.7% in rupee terms and a decline of 2.9% in dollar terms. The deceleration of exports is mainly due to South East Asian crisis and world wide recession.

(e) Export promotion measures are continuously being taken by the Government through changes in policies and procedures for providing an export friendly environment, Involvement of States in export promotion and consultation with trade and industry. A number of steps have been taken to promote exports which include lowering of interest rates on export credit, reduction in transaction cost through decentralisation and simplification of procedures and various other measures as enumerated in the Exim Policy. Steps have also been taken to promote exports through multilateral and billateral initiatives, identification of thrust sectors and focus regions. The Government is also initiating action through several measures to facilitate investment in sectors with strong export potential, encourage diversification of India's export basket, address Infrastructure short comings, imporve export facilitation measures and thus enhanace the overall competitiveness of Indian exports. The Government is according high priority to exports and all necessary steps are being taken to put exports on high gorwth trajectory.

**Steps to encourage Exports From The North-Eastern Region**

654. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on commerce, in its 36th Report on development potential of Commerce in the NER have recommended to establish an EPZ preferably in or around Guwahati with Government funds to encourage export from the region;

(b) if so, the details of the steps being taken by Government to implement the aforesaid recommendation of the Committee;

(c) the budgetary allocation made, if any; and

(d) the target fixed for its implementation?

THE MINISTER OF-COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) to (d) The proposal for setting up of an EPZ in the North Easterm region with central assistance was considered in consultation with the Planning Commission. On the advice of the Planning Commission, it has been decided to explore the feasibility of converting the sanctioned Export Promotion Industrial Park (EPIP) in Assam located near Guwahati into an EPZ for the North Eastern region. The State Government has been requested to communicate its views in the matter.

**Target set for Export of Mangoes.**

655. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any target has been set for mango exports during the forthcoming season;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and